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ABSTRACT

A questionnaire, developed in cooperation with the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) Task Force for Career Education and representatives of several State education agencies, brought together "base-line" information which serves as the basis for the paper. Data given reflects returns from 41 States and territories, a 75 percent sampling, and shows that two-thirds of the respondents indicated higher than midpoint priority for career education. Other topics covered in the report include: (1) action taken by State education agencies to support career education, (2) legislation related to career education, (3) activities of the CCSSO, (4) activities of the U. S. Office of Education, and (5) individual State efforts. Although not intended as an in-depth study, the paper concludes that career education is growing nationally. (MW)

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CAREER EDUCATION: ALIVE AND WELL?

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A Report
Prepared for the
Task Force for Career Education
of the
Council of Chief State School Officers

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EDUCATION & WELFARE
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Washington, D.C.

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In a recent issue of the Journal of Teacher Education (Summer, 1973), Commissioner John Ottina commented that

Despite some changes in administrative responsibility and some budgetary belt-tightening, career education is alive and well in the Office and, if anything, is moving ahead with accelerated vigor and vitality.

The article ("Career Education is Alive and Well") presented the viewpoint that, even though [redacted] and would continue to be hurdles to surmount before Career Education could materialize into the program that was perceived by Sidney Marland and others, the future of Career Education appeared to be viewed as optimistic.

With apologies to the Commissioner, and with clear recognition that hindsight is much easier to come by than foresight, I have taken the liberty of paraphrasing the title used by the Commissioner, and in effect would ask the question, "Is Career Education Alive and Well?"

I think we must consider the question because, since the Commissioner prepared the article for the Journal, there have been significant changes--both in terms of "administrative responsibility" and of "budgetary belt-tightening." As you are aware, neither version (Senate or House) of the current appropriations bill would provide funds for Career Education, so there is, for all intents and purposes, a zero funding for FY74. (You will recall that the OE recommendation for Career Education was \$14 million.) The zero funding problem has been compounded by the recommendation and decision that Voc Ed funds will not be used to support Career Education. (This was reported to us by Bill Lerce in Hyannis.) The net effect of these events is that the prospect of federal funds to support Career Education during FY74 is quite minimal.

This in no way should imply any lack of either commitment or enthusiasm on the part of the Commissioner and the USOE. Commissioner Ottina has instructed

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the Career Education Center, formerly headed by Bill Smith, to remain together as a planning team, and to work toward the development of plans that might be implemented in FY75.

In addition to the efforts of the Career Education Center, the commitment of OE to the concept of Career Education is also quite visible in the Occupational Cluster Curriculum Development Projects. From this effort are emerging new and more relevant curriculums for several of the "Occupational Clusters", including Public Service, Manufacturing, Construction, and Communications. As the concept of Career Education grows, these products will serve as extremely useful tools to SEA's and local school systems alike. However, it is apparent that additional funds will be necessary to complete the overall task.

Additionally, there is also a commitment to Career Education from and through the NIE Task Force for Career Education. However, with the distinct possibility of a fifty percent reduction in appropriated monies the group at NIE facing some tough decisions relating to activities and priorities.

With the above thoughts in mind, I would suggest, at the federal level, Career Education is alive, and that there are several positive attributes that can be noted. I would, however, suggest that its health be more carefully considered.

Interestingly, the vitality, vigor and acceleration of Career Education at the state and territorial level would appear to be considerably healthier than has been suggested at the federal level. This, at least, is the impression one receives from examining the results of the recent questionnaire relating to the status of Career Education in the several state and territorial educational jurisdictions.

The data from the questionnaire are reported in the following paragraphs. It should be emphasized at the outset, however, that the data given reflect

only the returns (as of this writing) of forty-one states and territories.. This is ofcourse, nearly seventy-five percent, but it is not a complete sampling.

Priority Status of Career Education

Of the forty-one states and territories responding, twelve have indicated a high (1) priority for Career Education, while fifteen others have indicated a slightly less high (2) degree of priority. Six states indicated a mid-point degree (3), while six others indicated a priority slightly less than the mid-point (4), and one indicated a low degree of priority (5).

One state did not indicate a degree of priority for Career Education.

From the above, it can be noted that over two-thirds (twenty-seven) of the respondent states and territories have indicated a priority for Career Education that is higher than the mid-point. It can also be noted that these twenty-seven states and territories comprise nearly one half (forty-eight percent) of the total "population" (fifty-six states and territories). Using either scale, the degree of priority, and, by inference, the commitment assigned to Career Education by SEA's would appear to be significant.

Action Taken by SEA to Support Career Education

Because this aspect of the questionnaire deals with two variables (growth and total number), the results have been portrayed in a slightly different manner. On the horizontal axis are shown the years in which the events or actions took place, while the actions themselves are depicted on the vertical axis. On the right vertical axis are shown the total actions in each category.

	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	SUM
State Board Resolution		2		2	5	6	15
Position Statement		1	2	1	13	10	27
State Plan		2	3	1	4	18	28
Coordinator	1	2		3	12	15	33
Budget			1	4	4	9	18

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As can be observed, there has been a fairly marked growth pattern, one that started slowly, but which, during the past two years, has accelerated sharply.

Legislation Relating to Career Education

Of the forty-one states and territories that have responded to the questionnaire, fifteen either have legislation relating to Career Education or have initiated plans for such legislation. Seven of the respondent states--Arizona, Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida, Louisiana, Ohio, and Washington--have indicated that actual legislation exists while eight others have indicated that some form of planning for Career Education legislation has taken place.

The remaining twenty respondent states indicated that no legislation existed. In several instances it was noted that such legislation was not needed to support Career Education, and in some instances it was suggested that legislation might actually be undesirable.

The results for this section of the questionnaire would seem to reinforce the concept that every state is unique, and that every state has differing needs.

Activities of CCSSO

In addition to the acquisition of basic data, the questionnaire attempted to determine, through a section relating to activities that might be performed by the Council, which activities might best assist the states and territories in their Career Education efforts. The results, in preferential order form, are shown below:

- *Development of Financial Guidelines for Career Education
- *Organization and Conduct of In-service Programs for Selected SEA Personnel

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•Compilation and Dissemination of Information About SEA Efforts in:

Curriculum and Modification
Evaluation Procedures
Development of State Career Education Plans

•Developmental of Model Legislation for Career Education

•Identification of Human and Material Resources

•Preparation, Publication, and Dissemination of a CCSSO Position Statement on Career Education

Activities of USOE

In an attempt to gain further "directional" information, the questionnaire included a section in which the states and territories could indicate the kinds of activities that might be provided under the aegis of USOE to promote, encourage, support, and facilitate Career Education programs in the states. These activities, in order of preference, are shown below:

- In-service Programs
- Curriculum Development
- Funding for Staff
- Dissemination Efforts
- Funding for R and D
- Special Projects
- Categorical Funding for Career Education

Individual State Efforts

The questionnaire also asked states to indicate activities which they had sponsored to encourage and/or facilitate Career Education. From the information provided by the forty-one respondent states and territories it

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would appear that there has been a considerable degree of activity on the part of the state or territorial education agencies.

One state (Maryland) was actively involved in a series of some seventeen conferences on Career Education that were held across the nation during the past couple of years. Governor's Conferences, State Conferences, and Regional Conferences have been held in several states. Workshops have been conducted in others. Funding for Special and/or Exemplary Projects has been obtained in some states. Task Forces or Steering Committees for Career Education have been established. At least one educational agency (Guam) has created an Office of Assistant Superintendent for Career Education. Other states have prepared and disseminated information in a variety of ways, including the preparation of tape/slide presentations, issuance of newsletters, publication of explanatory booklets, along with a variety of informative materials.

In short, considerable activity relating to Career Education, has been initiated in the several states. No attempt was made, however, to determine either degree or impact of the activities. Neither was any attempt made to determine the degree of implementation of Career Education programs in local school systems.

CONCLUSIONS

The questionnaire that has just been reported represented an attempt to determine the status--to try to find out what is going on in the field--of Career Education. It was not, obviously, an in-depth study, and caution should be exercised in drawing any inferences or conclusions. The results however, do indicate that across the nation Career Education is alive and well, and that it has been growing.

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But the fact that Career Education--in the several states and territories--appears to be alive, well, and growing does not by any means suggest that all is well. As with any growing organism, Career Education will need to have the kinds of support necessary to sustain its health and growth; otherwise it will wither and die.

The efforts of the individual states and territories are very laudible--especially when one considers the recent discouraging happenings at the federal level. It would appear, however, that the individual state efforts could be considerably strengthened if there were a considerable (and demonstrable) concern about Career Education at the federal level. Commitment--on the part of OE and NIE does exist, but more than commitment is needed.

Perhaps what is needed is a "National Spokesman" in the form of a National Advisory Council for Career Education. The Council of Chief State School Officers might be another "Spokesperson". Certainly it would seem that continuing efforts should be made to secure appropriate funding at the federal level for both development and expansion of Career Education programs in the several states. In this regard the collective support of the Council, through the Task Force for Career Education, would appear to be essential.